

**STATE AND NONSTATE ASSOCIATED GANGS:
CREDIBLE “MIDWIVES OF NEW SOCIAL
ORDERS”**

Max G. Manwaring

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FOREWORD

This monograph introduces a misunderstood aspect of “wars among the people.” The author addresses the interesting subject of the multifaceted nature and predominant role of gangs operating as state and nonstate proxies in the modern unbalanced global security environment. In every phase of the process of compelling radical political change, agitator-gangs and popular militias play significant roles in helping their political patrons prepare to take control of a targeted political-social entity. As a result, gangs (*bandas criminales* or whatever they may be called) are important components of a highly complex political-psychological-military act—contemporary irregular asymmetrical political war. In these terms, this monograph is relevant to modern political discussions regarding “new” socialism, populism and neo-populism, and hegemonic state and nonstate challenges to stronger opponents.

One can take an important step toward understanding these aspects of the political wars in our midst by examining some selected cases. Accordingly, this monograph examines a few premier cases that illustrate how populists and neo-populists; the new left, new socialists, or 21st century socialists; right-wing-criminal nonstate actors; and other nonstate and state actors use “agitators,” gangs, “super gangs,” and/or popular militias for national, regional, or global hegemonic purposes.

More specifically, this monograph examines examples of contemporary populism and neo-populism, 21st century socialism, and a nonstate actor (al-Qaeda) seeking regional and global hegemony. They are: first, paramilitary gang permutations in Colombia that are contributing significantly to the erosion of the

Colombian state and its democratic institutions, and implementing the anti-system objectives of their elite neo-populist sponsors; second, Hugo Chavez's use of the New Socialism and popular militias to facilitate his populist Bolivarian dream of creating a mega-state in Latin America; and, third, al-Qaeda's strategic and hegemonic use of political-criminal gangs to coerce substantive change in Spanish and other Western European foreign and defense policy and governance.

Lessons derived from these cases demonstrate how gangs might fit into a holistic effort to force radical political-social-economic change, and illustrate how traditional political-military objectives may be achieved indirectly, rather than directly. These lessons are significant beyond their own domestic political context in that they are harbingers of many of the "wars among the people" that have emerged out of the Cold War, and are taking us kicking and screaming into the 21st century. This timely monograph contributes significantly to an understanding of the new kinds of threats characteristic of a world in which instability and irregular conflict are no longer on the margins of global politics. For those responsible for making and implementing national security policy in the United States, the rest of the Western Hemisphere, Western Europe, and elsewhere in the world, this analysis is compelling. The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to offer this monograph as part of the growing interest in global and regional security and stability.



DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.
Director
Strategic Studies Institute

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MAX G. MANWARING is a Professor of Military Strategy in the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) of the U.S. Army War College (USAWC). He has held the General Douglas MacArthur Chair of Research at the USAWC, and is a retired U.S. Army colonel. He has served in various civilian and military positions, including the U.S. Southern Command, the Defense Intelligence Agency, Dickinson College, and Memphis University. Dr. Manwaring is the author and coauthor of several articles, chapters, and books dealing with Latin American security affairs, political-military affairs, and insurgency and counterinsurgency. His most recent book is *Insurgency, Terrorism, and Crime: Shadows from the Past and Portent for the Future*, University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. His most recent article is "Sovereignty under Siege: Gangs and Other Criminal Organizations in Central America and Mexico," in *Air & Space Power Journal* (in Spanish), forthcoming. His most recent SSI monograph is *A Contemporary Challenge to State Sovereignty: Gangs and Other Illicit Transnational Criminal Organizations in Central America, El Salvador, Mexico, Jamaica, and Brazil*. Dr. Manwaring holds an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Illinois, and is a graduate of the U.S. Army War College.

SUMMARY

This monograph introduces a poorly understood aspect of “wars among the people.” It deals with the complex protean character and hegemonic role of gangs operating as state and nonstate surrogates in the murky shallows of the contemporary asymmetric and irregular global security arena. This monograph, however, will not address tattooed teenage brigands. Rather, it will focus on ordinary-looking men and women who are politically and commercially dexterous.

Like insurgencies and other unconventional asymmetric irregular wars, there is no simple or universal model upon which to base a response to the gang phenomenon (gangs and their various possible allies or supporters). Gangs come in different types, with different motives, and with different modes of action. Examples discussed include Venezuela’s institutionalized “popular militias,” Colombia’s devolving paramilitary criminal or warrior bands (*bandas criminales*), and al-Qaeda’s loosely organized networks of propaganda-agitator gangs operating in Spain and elsewhere in Western Europe. The motives and actions of these diverse groups are further complicated by their evershifting alliances with insurgents, transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), drug cartels, warlords, governments that want to maintain a plausible denial of aggressive action, and any other state or nonstate actor that might require the services of a mercenary gang organization or surrogate.

Lessons derived from these cases demonstrate how gangs might fit into a holistic effort to compel radical political-social change, and illustrate how traditional political-military objectives may be achieved indirectly, rather than directly. These lessons are significant

beyond their own domestic political context in that they are harbingers of many of the “wars among the people” that have emerged out of the Cold War, and are taking us kicking and screaming into the 21st century.

STATE AND NONSTATE ASSOCIATED GANGS: CREDIBLE “MIDWIVES OF NEW SOCIAL ORDERS”

INTRODUCTION

This monograph introduces a poorly understood aspect of “wars among the people.”¹ It deals with the complex, protean character and hegemonic role of gangs, agitators, armed propagandists, popular militias, youth leagues, warrior bands, and other mercenary organizations operating as state and nonstate surrogates in the murky shallows of the contemporary asymmetric and irregular global security arena.² This monograph, however, will not address tattooed teenage brigands. Rather, it will focus on ordinary-looking men and women who are politically and commercially dexterous.

Like insurgencies and other unconventional asymmetric irregular wars, there is no simple or universal model upon which to base a response to the gang phenomenon. Gangs come in different types, with different motives, and with different modes of action. Gangs also come with various possible allies and supporters. Examples of state and nonstate associated gangs include Venezuela’s institutionalized “popular militias,” Colombia’s devolving criminal or warrior bands (*bandas criminales*), and al-Qai’da’s loosely organized networks of propaganda-agitator gangs that operate in Spain and other parts of Western Europe. The motives and actions of these diverse groups are further complicated by their evershifting alliances with insurgents, transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), drug cartels, warlords, governments that

want to maintain plausible denial of aggressive illicit action, and any other state or nonstate actor that might require the services of a mercenary gang organization or a surrogate.³

The internal and external hegemonic use of gangs goes back at least to the 16th century and Machiavelli, who said, “Some have made themselves masters of [city-states] by holding private correspondence with, and corrupting one party of the inhabitants. They have used several methods to do this.”⁴ Machiavelli must have thought that everyone clearly understood what he was saying, because he did not elaborate. As an example, everyone knew that political leaders, regardless of title, employed “unofficial henchmen” they could put to use in a contingency. It was V. I. Lenin in the early 20th century, however, who articulated the strategic asymmetric-irregular-political vision within which so many contemporary nonstate and nation-state actors now operate.⁵ Lenin argued that *anyone* wishing to compel an adversary to accede to his will, “must create [organize, train, and employ] a body of experienced agitators.”⁶ In that connection, anybody and everybody are free to study his ideas, adapt his ideas, and implement them for their own purposes.⁷ Lenin’s purpose was straightforward: If these instruments of statecraft (agitators; that is, the gang phenomenon) succeed in helping to tear apart the fabric upon which a targeted society rests, then the instability and violence they create can serve as the “midwife of a new social order.”⁸

In these terms, Lenin’s classic strategic vision is relevant to modern political discussions regarding “new” socialism, populism, and neo-populism, as well as hegemonic challenges to stronger opponents. Lenin’s Democratic-Socialism was the dictatorship

of the proletariat—only a Leninist Social-Democracy can represent the democratic will of a people (the proletarian or working class). His methodology was, therefore, populist and neo-populist. He was a populist in the sense of being anti-liberal democracy. He was neo-populist in terms of being anti-bourgeois-capitalist political-economic system.⁹ He was hegemonic in terms of the Leninist dictum that it can only be with the “defensive” extinction of all opposition that a new social order will come about, as well as true sovereignty.¹⁰ And only when Leninist surrogates are in place all around the world will Social-Democracy be safe and peace possible.¹¹ In any event and in every phase of the revolutionary process, agitator-gangs (popular militias) play significant roles in helping their political patrons prepare to take control of a targeted political-social entity. As a result, state and nonstate supported and associated gangs are important components of a highly complex political-psychological-military act—contemporary irregular asymmetric political war.¹²

One can take an important step toward understanding the political wars in our midst by examining a few selected cases. Accordingly, this monograph examines three contemporary variations on the Leninist agitator-gang theme. They are, first, Hugo Chavez’s use of the “New Socialism” to facilitate his neo-populist Bolivarian dream of creating a mega-state in Latin America that would be liberated from U.S. political and economic domination; second, gang permutations in Colombia that are contributing significantly to the erosion of the Colombian state and its democratic institutions and implementing the anti-system objectives of their elite neo-populist sponsors; and, third, al-Qai’da’s sophisticated, strategic, and hegemonic use of political-criminal gangs to coerce

substantive change in Western European foreign policy and governance.

Lessons derived from these cases demonstrate how gangs might fit into a holistic state or nonstate actor effort to compel radical political-social change and illustrate how traditional political-military objectives may be achieved indirectly rather than directly. These lessons are significant beyond their own domestic political context. They are harbingers of many of the wars among the people that have emerged from the Cold War and are taking us kicking and screaming into the 21st century.¹³ These cases are also significant beyond their uniqueness. The common political objective in each case is to coerce radical change in targeted political-economic-social systems.

LESSONS FROM VENEZUELA

President Chavez's Program to Fulfill His "Bolivarian Dream."

Since his election as President of Venezuela in 1998, Hugo Chavez has encouraged and continues to encourage his Venezuelan and other Latin American followers to pursue a populist and neo-populist/anti-democratic and anti-system/hegemonic defensive agenda that will liberate Latin America from the economic dependency and political imperialism of the North American "Colossus" (the United States). Chavez argues that his program for 21st century socialism (The New Socialism) is the only process through which the Bolivarian dream of a Latin American liberation movement can be achieved.¹⁴ This is not the rhetoric of a deranged dreamer. It is, significantly, the rhetoric of an individual who is performing the traditional and

universal Leninist function of providing a strategic vision and plan for gaining political power. And now, Chavez is providing militant reformers, disillusioned revolutionaries, and submerged *nomenklaturas* all over the world with a relatively orthodox Leninist model for the conduct and implementation of a regional, defensive, and total “war of all the people” (people’s war).¹⁵

Context.

President Chavez’s populist Bolivarian dream is based on four enablers. The first is the New Socialism. With that concept in place, one can envision building a new, neo-populist, anti-system social democracy, beginning with Venezuela and extending eventually to the whole of Latin America. In turn, that concept dictates a new system of power. Chavez calls this system “Direct Democracy.” Its main tenets dictate that:

- The new political authority must be a leader who communicates directly with the people;
- Elections, plebiscites, Congress, and the courts will provide formal democracy and international legitimacy but will have no real role in governance or the economy. Governance and the economy are the responsibility of the leader;
- The state, through the leader, will own or control the major means of production and distribution; and,
- The national and regional political-economic integration function will be performed by the leader by means of his financial, material, and political-military support to popular militias and “people’s movements.”¹⁶

The second enabler centers on social programs designed to provide tangible benefits to the masses of Venezuelans who were generally neglected by previous governments, and to strengthen the leader's internal power base.¹⁷

The third enabler focuses on communications with the intent of enabling the media (radio, television, newspapers, and magazines) to create a mass consensus. President Chavez has used the media skillfully to communicate his ideas, develop positive public opinion, and generate electoral successes. In connection with the Bolivarian dream, Chavez has directed communications to audiences all over Latin America. And, not surprisingly, the Chavez government has shut down some elements of Venezuela's opposition media to ensure the "irreversibility of the process for establishing socialism for the 21st century."¹⁸

The fourth enabler involves the reorganization of the security institutions of the country. In addition to the traditional armed forces, Chavez has created and funded the following independent forces:

- A National Police Force (*Guardia Nacional*);
- A 1.5 million-person military reserve organization;
- A paramilitary (popular militia) called Bolivarian Liberation Front (*Frente Bolivariano de Liberación*); and,
- Another paramilitary militia, "Army of the People in Arms" (*Ejército del Pueblo en Armas*).

All these institutions are outside the traditional control of the regular armed forces, and each organization is responsible directly to the leader (President Chavez). This institutional separation is

intended to ensure that no one military or paramilitary organization can control another, but the centralization of these institutions guarantees the leader absolute control of security and social harmony in Venezuela.¹⁹

What President Chavez has achieved by restructuring the Venezuelan government and its democratic institutions, improving the physical well-being of many poor Venezuelans, and verbalizing these successes on television and in the press is the formation of a unity of political-psychological-military effort and the development of a large, popular, internal, and external base of support. Moreover, the reorganization of the government and its security apparatus provides for presidential control of the political, economic, social, informational, and security instruments of state power that are intended to “deepen and extend” the bases of the regional liberation effort—and to enable the implementation of 4th Generation (asymmetric) Warfare (4GW).²⁰ Once all these enablers function together, they will destroy traditional Venezuelan and Latin American democracy and the old Venezuelan and Latin American political-economic system.²¹ The old democracy and the old system will be replaced by a new kind of democracy and a new type of political system—socialism for the 21st century. This takes us to Chavez’s Program for the Liberation of Latin America.

The Program for the Liberation of Latin America.

Applying the strategic principles of a new, realistic, theoretical model for action will achieve 21st century socialism. The model is based on the integration of all the instruments of state power under the direction of the leader and is what President Chavez calls 4th

Generation War, Asymmetric War, or a War of All the People. The most salient characteristics of this kind of war include the following five notions:

- The struggle is predominantly political-psychological, not military – although there is an important military or paramilitary role in the process;
- The conflict is lengthy and evolves through three, four, or more stages;
- The war is fought between belligerents with asymmetrical capabilities and asymmetrical responsibilities to their constituencies – giving the leader of a “direct democracy” an organizational advantage over the leadership of representative democracies;
- The struggle will have transnational dimensions and implications; and,
- The war will not be limited in purpose. It will be total in that it gives the winner absolute power to control or replace an existing government.²²

In this connection, President Chavez is planning for a long-term, three-stage, multiphase program for gaining power (regional hegemony). Though Chavez’s three stages use different terminology, they are similar to those of Lenin: (1) organization, (2) development and use of coercive political and limited military power, and (3) the capture of a targeted government.²³

A minimum of six phases elaborate that paradigm and outline the role of the paramilitary popular militias. General Gustavo Reyes Rangel Briceño articulated the phases, that might well have been written by Lenin, when the General accepted the office of Minister of Defense for the National Reserve and National Mobilization on July 18, 2007:

- Organize to propagate Latin American nationalism, train a cadre of professionals (propagandists and agitators) for leadership duties and political-military combat, and create selected environments of chaos;
- Create a Popular (political) Front out of the “debourgeoised” middle classes and other like-minded individuals, who will work together to disestablish opposed societies and defend the new social democracy;
- Foment regional conflicts. This would involve covert, gradual, and preparatory political-psychological-military activities in developing and nurturing popular support. As the number of recruits grows and the number of activities increases, the fomentation of regional conflicts would also involve the establishment and defense of “liberated zones;”
- Plan overt and direct intimidation activities, including popular actions (such as demonstrations, strikes, civic violence, personal violence, maiming, and murder) against feudal, capitalistic, militaristic opponents and against *yanqui* imperialism. The intent is to debilitate target states and weaken enemy military command and control facilities;
- Increase covert and overt political-psychological-economic-military actions directed at developing local popular militias to fight in their own zones, provincial or district militias to fight in their particular areas, and a larger military organization to fight in all parts of the targeted country with the cooperation of local and district militias; and,

- Directly, but gradually, confront a demoralized enemy military force and bring about its desired collapse—or, simply, invade a targeted country with the objective of imposing appropriate New Socialist governance.²⁴

Until the last moment in the last and decisive phase of the Latin American liberation process—when the targeted government is about to collapse—every action is preparatory work and not expected to provoke great concern from the enemy or its bourgeois allies.²⁵ Thus, by staying under his opponents’ “threshold of concern,” Chavez expects to “put his enemies to sleep—to later wake up dead.”²⁶ It is at the point of enemy collapse and the radical imposition of new Socialist governance that the people will begin to enjoy the benefits of love, happiness, peace, and well-being.²⁷

At present, however, Chavez is only in the beginning phases of his first preparatory Organizational Stage of the Program for the Liberation of Latin America. The culmination of stage one is still a long time away. Stages two and three must be several years down the revolutionary path. At the strategic level, then, Chavez appears to be consolidating his base position in Venezuela, taking a relatively low revolutionary profile, and waiting for a propitious time to begin the expansion of the revolution on a supra-national Latin American scale. He will likely continue to focus his primary attack on the legitimacy of the U.S. economic and political domination of the Americas and on any other possible rival. And he will likely continue to conduct various rhetorical and political-military attacks on adversaries; continue to cultivate diverse allies in Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia; and to engage his allies and his popular militias in

propaganda and agitation “seeding operations” for the creation of a receptive political climate throughout the Western Hemisphere.²⁸

Responses.

One school of thought in Latin America – expressed privately, if not publicly, to a *norteamericano* (North American) – firmly supports Chavez and his supranational Bolivarian dream. Those who oppose Chavez are against his “lack of realism,” are ambivalent, or just do not care. The Chavez supporters are organizing and preparing for the future. The opposition waits, watches, and debates.²⁹

The United States has tended to ignore the larger problem of responsible democratic governance and concentrate on the war on drugs. If there is another North American concern, it would be the problem of possible nuclear proliferation and the associated Venezuelan-Iranian alliance. Countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua appear to support the Bolivarian dream. Others that might be affected by the destabilizing consequences of Chavez’s neo-populist political-psychological-economic efforts throughout the Western Hemisphere have not wanted to deal with the problem.³⁰ Apparently, very few individuals or governments will acknowledge Chavez’s goal as a clearly defined, universally recognized threat in the Americas until large numbers of uniformed troops of one sovereign state directly invade the sovereign territory of another.³¹

Key Points and Lessons.

- Although seemingly overambitious, Chavez’s concept of a regional super insurgency con-

ducted primarily by popular militias appears to be in accord with Lenin's approach to the conduct of irregular asymmetrical political war. This notion is quietly opening a new era in which much of the world is ripe for those who wish to coerce political-social change and change history, avenge grievances, find security in new structures, and/or protect old ways.

- Asymmetric war may be accomplished by those familiar with the indirect approach to conflict, using the power of dreams and the importance of public opinion, along with a multidimensional flexibility that goes well beyond conventional forms. The consequent interactions among all these factors in asymmetric war make it impossible for the military dimension to act as the traditionally dominant actor.
- The threat, thus, is not a conventional enemy military force or the debilitating instability generated by an asymmetric aggressor. Rather, at base, the threat is the inability or unwillingness of the government in office to take responsible and legitimate measures to exercise effective sovereignty and to provide security and well-being for all of its citizens. That governmental failure to protect the people is what gives an oppositionist aggressor the opening and justification for its existence and action.
- As a corollary, the ultimate threat is either state failure, or the violent imposition of a radical socio-economic-political restructuring of the state and its governance in accordance with the values (good, bad, or nonexistent) of the victor.
- Targeted regimes and their international allies that fail to understand Chavez and his political-

psychological intentions and respond only with military or police power to his rhetoric, his phantom people's militias, and his other irregular and asymmetrical methods are not likely to be successful in their attempts to counter his Bolivarian dream.

These lessons are all too relevant to the “new” political wars of the 21st century. General Sir Rupert Smith warns us that, “War as cognitively known to most noncombatants, war as a battle in a field between men and machinery, war as a massive deciding event in a dispute in international affairs; such war no longer exists.”³²

NEW LESSONS FROM COLOMBIA

Gangs Devolving from the Paramilitary Demobilization Program.

Over the past 40 to 50 years, Colombia's potential, its democracy, and its effective sovereignty have been slowly deteriorating as the consequences of three ongoing, simultaneous, and interrelated wars involving three major violent, internal nonstate groups. They are the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the paramilitary/vigilante AUC (The United Self-Defense Groups of Colombia), and the illegal transnational drug industry. This unholy trinity (or nexus) of politically motivated and terroristic TCOs and nonstate actors is perpetrating a level of human horror, violence, criminality, corruption, and internal instability that is threatening Colombia's survival as an organized democratic nation-state. Additionally, neo-populist (anti-system) activities of some of that

country's elites further complicate the conflict picture. These elites have never supported the idea of strong national institutions and the development of a viable nation-state. The issue is, simply, that the power to control terroristic insurgents, paramilitary groups, and criminal drug traffickers is also the power to control the virtually autonomous elites.³³

At the same time, a new dynamic is being introduced into the ongoing multidimensional conflict in Colombia. Several types of illegal nonstate groups (gangs) are devolving out of President Álvaro Uribe's AUC demobilization and reintegration program. An even greater potential threat to security and stability coming from the emergence of these new *bandas criminales* (criminal gangs) is thought to be the possible formal establishment of a federation of splinter AUC groups, existing drug trafficking organizations, currently faltering FARC units, and the much smaller National Liberation Army (ELN) insurgent group. Such a federation could become a more-than-significant terrorist-criminal-insurgent nonstate actor in the Colombian malaise.³⁴

Context: A New Gang Dimension in the Colombian Conflict.

A new force inserting itself into the Colombian conflict is a large number of *bandas criminales* that have come into being as a result of the formal demobilization of the AUC, and the disintegration of some FARC units. These gangs are altering the configuration of the insurgency and the illegal drug industry, as well as complicating the already crowded conflict arena. That said, and because of the generally autonomous nature of the AUC and its new creations and the lack of certainty

regarding the FARC, it is hard to understand and predict what the gangs may or may not be doing—and what they may or may not mean. Despite the general lack of certainty regarding the new gangs, however, there are a few things that are becoming clearer as the *bandas criminales* become more involved in the general conflict.

First, we know that all the newly devolved gangs are more autonomous, less well understood, and more unpredictable than their parent organizations. We also know that the ad hoc organization of the new gangs makes it difficult to know who they are, their numbers, why they do what they do, and their linkages with other organizations, legal and illegal. Additionally, we know that:

- As of the end of 2008, there are an estimated 100 or more independent *bandas criminales* operating actively over at least 20 percent of the Colombian national territory. Membership estimates range from 3,000 to over 10,000.
- Like their parent, the new AUC (paramilitary) gangs tend to be organized horizontally with no predetermined structure. The specific structure of a given gang is determined by its leadership, the tasks it must perform, and the requirements of the locale within which it operates.
- AUC Organizational groups are established through a process of franchisement.
- Parent AUC and FARC organizations generally allow subordinate groups considerable latitude in the ways and means chosen to accomplish a given task.
- Particularly “dirty” operations are often conducted by “hired guns” from among aspirants, sympathizers, or unemployed

“nobodies,” rather than regular members of an AUC or FARC gang.

- AUC and FARC *bandas criminales* conduct four basic operations:
 1. Direct and sometimes lead specific military operations (e.g., “social cleansing”) against selected “uncooperative” groups;
 2. Perform the business-as-usual armed propaganda functions prescribed by V.I. Lenin for propaganda-agitator gangs.³⁵
 3. Direct and sometimes lead relatively sophisticated political and psychological actions; and,
 4. Collect, hold, and allocate money, weapons, and other resources.³⁶

Second, the use of terror, fear, and other “barbaric” methods (mutilation kidnapping, murder, rape, pillage) is considered to be a force multiplier and a rational psychological means of controlling a larger population. More specifically, these methods allow a small force to accomplish the following:

- Convince the people of a given area that the AUC paramilitaries are the real power in the country;
- Exert authority over a population—even a population supposedly under the control of a government or another nonstate actor;
- Persuade or coerce public opinion, electoral conduct, and leader decision and policymaking; and,
- Hold off a much larger force and fight another actor at the same time.³⁷

Third, the relationship of the new gangs to elements of the Colombian government is becoming more evident. Evidence of AUC association with the government and some of its major institutions—and resultant support—can be seen (if not proved in a court of law) in two different instances:

- Ties between paramilitary groups and Colombian legislators can be seen in more than 40 current and former congressmen being charged with one type or another of collaboration with the AUC. It has been and continues to be asserted that “Congress is awash in AUC cash” to ensure that paramilitary influence remains strong in the highest levels of government.³⁸
- From the time of the AUC’s organization, the Colombian military has been thought to have close, if informal, ties to the paramilitaries, as in two recent examples: Army Chief General Mario Montoya was implicated in collaboration charges initiated by the attorney general, and Intelligence Chief Jorge Noguera was dismissed as a result of similar charges. Additionally, specific documents are now coming to light that indicate close ties between the Army and the AUC.³⁹

Fourth, several types of gangs are devolving from the AUC demobilization program. The common beliefs regarding motives and ties back to the AUC are that they are all involved in some sort of criminal activity, and that they are controlled and led by hard-core paramilitary leaders who have not demobilized. Two groups—The New Generation Organization (ONG) and the Black Eagles—operate in several Colombian departments (provinces) and provide good examples

of the new gang phenomenon. A third set of groups, associated with the old AUC Northern Bloc, is also worth consideration.

The ONG is an example of a new group that has continued acting much as the old AUC did. ONG in the southern Department of Nariño is fighting the insurgents. ONG is also working to control (for its own purposes) drug crops, processing facilities, and trafficking routes into Ecuador and the Pacific Ocean. Additionally, ONG has formed an ad hoc alliance with an armed wing of a drug cartel called the Rasrojos. Reportedly, the purpose of that alliance is to provide protection from other gangs, drug cartels, and insurgents operating in the region.⁴⁰

In the north of Colombia—La Guajira, Norte de Santander, and Santa Marta, for example—newly emerging gangs are involved in lucrative smuggling opportunities for commodities such as drugs, weapons, and oil. They compete with other illegal groups and the Colombian state for access to smuggling routes and oil pipelines that lead to key ports on the Caribbean Sea. Thus, the Black Eagles and their TCO and other gang allies are not operating as the old-style AUC. They are not deliberately targeting the FARC and ELN insurgents. They are operating in ad hoc alliances with various drug, criminal, and insurgent groups. More often than not, they tend to fight any other group that might be in control of valuable commodities, strategic corridors, and seaports. Thus, the Black Eagles appear to have inserted themselves forcefully into an existing transnational criminal network. In that connection, and like some other Latin American gangs, some Black Eagle gangs are engaged in extortion and racketeering and have been known to rent themselves out as mercenary soldiers and *sicarios* (hired killers).⁴¹

Elsewhere along the Caribbean coast of Colombia and in the slums of some of the major cities, new gangs are literally going from house-to-house and neighborhood-to-neighborhood conducting “social cleansing” operations against FARC and ELN insurgents. At the same time, these operations contribute to creation of the political space necessary to allow the gangs to achieve their commercial (self-enrichment) objectives. These new *bandas criminales* are thought to be connected with the old AUC Northern Bloc (BN) umbrella organization. That organization was composed of a large network of gangs that operated independently until their co-option or subordination to the AUC prior to 2002. The basic structure of the BN is still intact and is reportedly trying to reassert control of areas where they formerly operated.⁴²

Fifth, it would appear that the new Colombian gangs are more than *bandas criminales*. They are reshaping the narco-terrorist-insurgent-criminal world in Colombia, and they are exacerbating threats already eroding Colombian democracy and the Colombian state. In these terms, the new AUC and FARC gangs are doing what gangs all over the world do best. As they evolve:

- They generate more and more socio-economic-political instability and violence over wider and wider sections of the political map;
- They coercively neutralize, control, depose, or replace existing governmental service and security institutions;
- They create autonomous enclaves that are sometimes called criminal free-states, sovereignty free-states, para-states, or “ungoverned territories;” and,
- Thus, they change values in a given society to those of their criminal or ideological leaders,

and act as Leninist “midwives” that begin the process of radically changing the society and the state.⁴³

Finally, even though there is evidence that the FARC is militarily weaker now than it has been at any time in the past 30 years, it has organized an active international support network (the *Coordinadora Continental Bolivariana* or CCB) and a secret political party structure (the Clandestine Colombian Communist Party or PC-3). This is a classic Leninist political response to a military setback, and has serious implications for the ongoing internal war in Colombia. This response portends a move away from the direct confrontation of the armed forces through guerrilla war, toward the subtle continuation of the revolutionary struggle against the state through international and internal political-psychological-military coercion. As a consequence, the gang phenomenon takes on new roles and preeminent importance. It is expected that some FARC units will emerge as variations on the existing *bandas criminales*, and that rumors of FARC’s demise are greatly exaggerated.⁴⁴

Where the Unholy Trinity Leads.

Today’s threats from the unholy trinity at work in Colombia and the rest of the Western Hemisphere come in many forms and in a matrix of different kinds of challenges, varying in scope and scale. If they have a single feature in common, however, they are systematic, well-calculated attempts to coerce radical political change. In that connection, we shall explore briefly two of the many consequences the narco-insurgent-paramilitary union has generated. First, the erosion of Colombian democracy will be examined;

then, the erosion of the state will be considered. From there, we shall go to the problem of state failure, the ultimate threat, and to the internal and external responses to that threat.

The Erosion of Colombian Democracy. In Colombia, we observe important paradoxes. Elections are held on a regular basis, but leaders, candidates, and elected politicians are also regularly assassinated. Literally hundreds of governmental officials, considered unacceptable by the nexus (unholy trinity), have been assassinated following their election. Additionally, intimidation, direct threats, and the use of relatively minor violence on a person, and his or her family, continue to play an important role *prior* to elections. And, as a corollary, it is important to note that although the media is free from state censorship, journalists and academicians who make their anti-narco-insurgent-paramilitary opinions known through the press—or too publicly—are systematically assassinated.⁴⁵

Consequently, it is hard to credit Colombian elections as democratic or free. Neither competition nor participation in elections can be complete in an environment where armed and unscrupulous nonstate actors compete violently with the government to control the government—before and after elections. Moreover, it is hard to consider Colombia as a democratic state as long as elected leaders are subject to control or vetoes imposed by vicious nonstate actors. As a consequence, Ambassador David Jordan argues that Colombia is an “anocratic” democracy. That is, Colombia is a state that has the procedural features of democracy but retains the features of an autocracy where the ruling elites face no scrutiny or accountability.⁴⁶ In any event, the intimidating and persuasive actions of the narco-insurgent-paramilitary alliance in the electoral

processes have pernicious effects on Colombian democracy and tend to erode the ability of the state to carry out its legitimizing functions.

The Partial Collapse of the State. The Colombian state has undergone severe erosion on two general levels. First, despite government claims to the contrary, the state's presence and authority is questionable over large geographical portions of the country. Second, the idea of the partial collapse of the state is closely related to the nonphysical deterioration of democracy. Jordan argues that corruption is key in this regard and is a prime mover toward "narco-socialism."⁴⁷

In the first instance, the notion of partial collapse of the state refers to the fact that there is an absence or only partial presence of state institutions in many of the rural areas and poorer urban parts of the country. Also, even in those areas that are not under the direct control of narco, insurgent, or paramilitary organizations, institutions responsible for protecting citizens—notably the police and judiciary—have been coerced to the point where they find it very difficult and dangerous to carry out their basic functions. Indicators of this problem can be seen in three sets of facts. First, the murder rate in Colombia is among the highest in the world. Second, and perhaps most important, the proportion of homicides that end with a conviction is less than 4 percent.⁴⁸ Third, many of Colombia's worst criminal warlords and drug traffickers are extradited to the United States for trial, conviction, and incarceration.⁴⁹ These indicators of impunity strongly confirm that the state is not adequately exercising its social-contractual and constitutional-legal obligations to provide individual and collective security within the national territory.

In the second instance, nonphysical erosion of the state centers on the widespread, deeply entrenched issue of corruption. As one example, in 1993 and 1994, the U.S. Government alluded to the fact that former President Ernesto Samper had received money from narcotics traffickers. Later, in 1996, based on that information, the United States withdrew Mr. Samper's visa and decertified Colombia for not cooperating in combating illegal drug trafficking. Subsequently, the Colombian Congress absolved Samper of all drug charges by a vote of 111 to 43.⁵⁰ In that connection, and not surprisingly, another indicator of government corruption at the highest levels is found in the Colombian Congress. The Senate—in a convoluted legal parliamentary maneuver—decriminalized the issue of “illicit enrichment” by making it a misdemeanor that could be prosecuted only after the commission of a felony.⁵¹ Clearly, the reality of corruption at any level of government favoring the illegal drug industry, the paramilitaries, or other criminal elements militates against responsible governance and the public well-being. And, in these terms, the reality of corruption brings into question the reality of Colombian democracy and the reality of effective state sovereignty.

In short, the gang challenge to Colombian national security, stability, and sovereignty and the attempt to neutralize, control, or depose incumbent governmental institutions takes us to the strategic level threat. In this context, crime, violence, and instability are only symptoms of the threat. The ultimate threat is either state failure or the violent imposition of a radical socio-economic-political restructuring of the state and its governance in accordance with criminal values. In either case, gangs contribute to the evolutionary state failure process by which the state loses the

capacity and/or the will to perform its fundamental governance, service, and security functions. Over time, the weaknesses inherent in its inability to perform the business of the state in various parts of the country are likely to lead to the eventual erosion of state sovereignty (authority) and legitimacy. In the end, the state does not control its national territory or the people in it.⁵² In that connection, some close observers of the gang phenomenon assert that the coerced change toward criminal values in targeted societies is leading to a “New Dark Age.”⁵³

Responses to the Armed Nonstate Threats.

Colombia, the United States, and other countries that might ultimately be affected by the destabilizing consequences of the narco-insurgent-paramilitary alliance in Colombia have tended to deal with the problem in a piecemeal and ad hoc fashion or even ignore it. Significantly, in Colombia, this has been done over the years within alternating environments of cooperation and mutual enmity between the civil government and the armed forces.⁵⁴ With the promulgation of the socio-political-military *Plan Colombia* in 2000, however, and subsequent policies such as Democratic Security in 2002, and various plans (*Libertad Uno*) in 2003 and *Plan Patriota* in 2004–05, there is now the basis of a coherent political-military project—but still not the kind of holistic “game plan” advocated by former U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Myles Frechette.⁵⁵

Frechette calls for a holistic, long-term national capability-building “game plan” that would include taxing the upper elements of society that currently pay few or no taxes.⁵⁶ Additionally, there are no apparent

quests for improved governmental legitimacy; no serious efforts to implement a viable unity of civil-military effort; no coordinated, long-term plan to isolate the armed protagonists from their various sources of support; and no political commitment to the country or to allies to “stay the course of the war.” Additionally, the intelligence and information wars within the war leave much to be desired.⁵⁷

In all, it appears that Colombia is “muddling through” and, after nearly 50 years, either continuing to adapt to the situation or continuing to hope for the problem to go away.

Key Points and Lessons.

- Colombia faces not one but a potent combination of three different armed threats to its democracy and its being. The unholy “Hobbesian trinity” of illegal drug traffickers, insurgents, and paramilitary gang organizations has created a situation in which life is indeed “nasty, brutish, and short.”
- Each set of violent nonstate actors that constitute the loose trinity has its own specific—and different—motivation, but the common denominator is the political objective of effectively controlling and radically changing the Colombian government and state as we know them.
- The narco-insurgent-paramilitary alliance utilizes a mix of aggressive, widespread, and violent political-psychological, economic-commercial, and military-terrorist strategies and tactics primarily to control human and physical terrain in Colombia and other countries

where it operates. The generalized result of the intimidating and destabilizing activities of this alliance of violent nonstate actors is a steadily increasing level of criminal manpower, wealth, and power that many nation-states of the world can only envy.

- At the same time, that unholy trinity represents a triple threat to the effective sovereignty of the Colombian state and to its hemispheric neighbors. It undermines the vital institutional pillars of regime legitimacy and stability, challenges the central governance of countries affected, and actually exercises effective political authority (sovereignty) over portions of physical and human national terrain.
- Despite some concern regarding the fact that FARC insurgent leadership may not live to see the fruition of its Leninist-Maoist national revolutionary efforts, the current leadership appears to be unconcerned with speeding up or energizing its deliberate plan of action to seize the power of the state.⁵⁸
- In that connection, it appears that the major protagonists think of time being on their side and that their existing informal marriage of convenience is evolving satisfactorily into a more formal and lucrative criminal federation. Accordingly, that criminal federation may eventually be able to "buy its way to [power in Colombia]."⁵⁹
- Alternatively, there is evidence that FARC is moving from a theoretically quick military approach for taking control of the Colombian state to a broader and slower political-psychological-military approach. The above

commercial or political possibilities need not be mutually exclusive. In either or both instances, the Colombian state is likely to be severely tested.

- The Colombian and U.S. responses to the narco-insurgent-paramilitary nexus have been ad hoc, piecemeal, and without a holistic strategic civil-military campaign plan. As a consequence, Colombia and its U.S. ally have not addressed the real war that is taking place in the hemisphere. That war continues to fester and grow toward the ultimate political objective of radically changing the Colombian state.

The Colombian insurgency and its associated TCO and gang phenomena have been evolving for at least 40 to 50 years. In that time, violence and destruction have varied like a sine curve from acute to tolerable. However, just because a situation is “tolerable” does not mean the problem has gone away or should be ignored. Sun Tzu reminds us: “For there has never been a protracted war from which a country has benefited.”⁶⁰

LESSONS FROM AL-QAI'DA'S ELEVATION OF NONSTATE IRREGULAR ASYMMETRIC WARFARE ONTO THE GLOBAL ARENA: DEFENSIVE JIHAD IN WESTERN EUROPE

The Organizational Context.

Al-Qai'da has succeeded in doing what no other nonstate actor or terrorist organization has previously accomplished. It has succeeded in elevating asymmetric, insurgent warfare onto the global arena.⁶¹

Far from being ingenuous, apolitical, and unique, al-Qai'da acts in accordance with a political logic that is a continuation of politics by indirect, irregular, and violent means. Al-Qai'da and its leadership do not pretend to reform an unjust order or redress perceived grievances. The intent is to destroy perceived Western regional and global enemies and replace them as the world hegemonic power. Thus, al-Qai'da's asymmetric global challenge is not abstract; it is real.⁶² The point from which to begin to understand the threat and respond effectively to it is the organizational context.

A popular term being used to describe al-Qai'da's organizational structure is "Leaderless *Jihad*."⁶³ That term accurately characterizes the concept of no formal chain of command and further illustrates the fact that killing or neutralizing al-Qai'da leadership only causes a basic cell to lie dormant for a season, then it renews itself automatically.⁶⁴ The term, however, is deceptive. Leaderless *jihad* implies that there is no central directing authority, no focus of purpose and effort, no coordination of movement and action, and no real threat. Al-Qai'da, in fact, is anything but leaderless or benign. Osama bin Laden organized al-Qai'da very carefully to take advantage of human and physical terrain and used multiple and modifiable methods to compel enemies to serve his purposes, and comply with his will.⁶⁵ In these terms, al-Qai'da can and does elevate nonstate asymmetric insurgent warfare into the global security arena and engages in hegemonic actions—just as if it were a nation-state attempting to force political change in other nation-states.⁶⁶ Yet, al-Qai'da does not rely on highly structured organization, large numbers of military forces, or costly weaponry.

Al-Qai'da leadership understands that anyone wishing to compel an adversary to accede to its will

must organize and employ a relatively small body of propagandists and agitators (cells or gangs). The purpose is clear. These irregular, asymmetric instruments of statecraft are integral parts of the revolutionary process, and their purpose is “to expedite the fall of the common enemy.”⁶⁷ That enemy is the globally hegemonic “West.” This unacknowledged Leninist dictum is illustrated in the general application of al-Qai’da’s global strategy, and, as more specific examples, in Western Europe.⁶⁸ The use of gangs as components of strategy and tactics, however, is not unique to al-Qai’da or confined to Europe.⁶⁹ There are armed nonstate groups all over the world that find their perceived notions of the al-Qai’da model for asymmetric global challenge to be salient.⁷⁰ The key role of the al-Qai’da propaganda-agitator gangs operating in Western Europe, however, can be understood more completely within the context of the general organizational structure.

The Leader and His Organizational Vision.

Experience and an expanding understanding of al-Qai’da in Western Europe indicates that Osama bin Laden represents a militant, revolutionary, and energetic commitment to a long-term approach to return to Islamic governance, social purpose, and tradition. He has further identified the primary objective of the movement as power.⁷¹ Power is absolutely necessary in order to implement the political, religious, economic, and social changes explicit and implicit in the idea of a return to Islamic governance of Muslim peoples and the resurrection of the Islamic Caliphate of the year 711 A.D.⁷² Power is generated by an enlightened, well-educated, well-motivated, and

disciplined organization that can plan and implement an effective program for gaining control of societies and states. Power is maintained and enhanced as the organization acts as a “virtual state” within a state (the nonterritorial Islamic state) and replaces the artificial and illegitimate (apostate) governments that impose their rule on contemporary Muslim societies.⁷³ Thus, al-Qai’da members—from those in the highest positions to new recruits—have had to pledge their lives to the achievement of this vision. And, as in the time of the empire, they all must pledge their allegiance to the leader.⁷⁴

The Base Organization. Osama bin Laden’s first and continuing concern must center on organization. The preparatory activities necessary to achieve his long-term vision are classical Leninist and Maoist. He created a motivated and enlightened cadre, a political party-type infrastructure, a small loosely organized guerrilla network, and a support mechanism for the entire organization.⁷⁵ Organizational vitality, breadth, and depth also provide bases for local, regional, and global effectiveness. Thus, the base organization, *not operations*, is considered key to al-Qai’da’s success. Importantly, al-Qai’da means “the base.”

Generally, and at first glance, al-Qai’da appears to be structured much like a classical hierarchical movement along rigid, close-knit, secretive lines in a pyramid structure. A closer examination of that multi-tiered structure, however, indicates a substantial corporate enterprise designed especially for conducting large and small-scale business operations and terrorist activities all around the globe. As a result, this organization looks much like transnational criminal gang organizations in the Americas that can quickly and flexibly respond to any kind of changing situation. Thus, it is more helpful

to look at al-Qai'da's structure arranged in horizontal concentric circles, rather than as a traditional vertical pyramid.⁷⁶

The Inner Circle of the horizontal al-Qai'da organization is composed of a small Council (*shura*) of Elders and a few hundred carefully selected, talented members (coordinators) who operate the functional structures considered essential to long-term effectiveness and durability – regardless of who serves as the leader. There are at least six of these functional organizations within the base organization: military, funding, procurement, manpower and logistics, training and personnel services, and communications and propaganda.⁷⁷ This inner circle provides strategic and operational-level guidance and support to its horizontal network of compartmentalized cells and allied (franchised) associations (groups or networks). This structure also allows relatively rapid shifting of operational control horizontally rather than through a slow vertical chain of command. This organization can, then, respond to an unexpected problem or to a promising opportunity in a timely manner.⁷⁸

The Second Ring of the concentric organizational circle consists of an unknown number of "holy warriors" who are veterans of the campaigns against the Russians in Afghanistan and subsequent efforts in Iraq, the Middle East, and North Africa. They are proven and trustworthy (committed) and provide leadership and expertise to the worldwide, multi-dimensional network.

Al-Qai'da's *Third Ring* consists of thousands of Islamic militants (aspirants and sympathizers) from around the globe. These individuals make up a loose alliance of political parties and groups, as well as transnational criminal, insurgent, and terrorist

organizations and cells that can be called on virtually any time for aid, sanctuary, and personnel. (A cautionary note should be added here: That is, leaders of many Islamic communities have consistently condemned the terrorist activities of al-Qai'da, and do not want to be associated with it or Osama bin Laden. Thus, al-Qai'da is not a universally accepted organization within the various Islamic communities around the globe, and should not be perceived as representing other Islamic political points of view. The Islamic "sympathizers" in the Third Ring of the Base Organization are only a small portion of the entire Islamic community).

The Outer Ring of the al-Qai'da organizational structure consists of more amorphous groups of Muslims and non-Muslims (outsiders) in 90 countries around the world. They generally support Osama bin Laden's view of the West as the primary enemy of Islam and of humanity.⁷⁹ Accordingly, active support for al-Qai'da comes from a broad range of social classes, professions, and various Muslim and non-Muslim groups. A highly respected al-Qai'da expert, Michael Scheuer, asserts that the next generation of membership will be more diverse and larger, more professional, less operationally visible, and more adept at using modern communications and military tools.⁸⁰

One example of the quality and talent of the people who are working in bin Laden's contemporary base structure is his world-class media organization. This apparatus is already very sophisticated, flexible, and omnipresent in virtually every country in the world. Al-Qai'da's media people produce daily combat reports, videos of attacks on enemy targets, interviews with various al-Qai'da and other Islamic leaders, and a steady flow of news bulletins to feed 24/7 satellite television networks around the globe.

Thus, the al-Qai'da media are providing Muslim and other communities around the world with its version of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan—and elsewhere—professionally, reliably, and in real time.⁸¹ If Scheuer is right, the next generation can only be more sophisticated and formidable than the present one, and can only enhance al-Qai'da's position as a global hegemonic power in an environment in which public opinion, correct and incorrect perceptions, and deep religious and political beliefs dominate the human terrain.⁸² The resultant radicalization of parts of the Islamic and anti-Western world—particularly young people—has already generated general socio-political problems, as well as specific immigration, law-enforcement, foreign policy, and national security issues in virtually all of Western Europe.⁸³

Al-Qai'da's Regional and Global Challenge.

Al-Qai'da documents and statements envisage what Osama bin Laden calls a “defensive *Jihad*” that calls for three different general types of war—military, economic, and cultural-moral—divided into four stages and with well-defined strategic, operational, and tactical-level objectives.⁸⁴ The intent is to organize indirect and direct violence to sow panic and instability in a society; to destabilize, weaken, and/or depose perceived enemies; and to ultimately bring about radical political change. This kind of violence “shades on occasion into guerrilla warfare and even a substitute for war between states.”⁸⁵

This concept also allows military, political, and other facets of an al-Qai'da insurgency to be conducted in tandem. The different types of war and their associated stages are sometimes overlapping and may

be altered. Stages may be added or reduced in scope as various milestones are met or not met. Moreover, objectives and the types of military and non-military ways and means chosen to achieve them, may be adjusted as a given situation dictates. Importantly, this kind of ambiguous war intentionally blurs the distinction between and among crime, terrorism, and conventional war—and makes it substantially more difficult to counter. Flexibility and deliberate ambiguity in organizational planning and implementation of the program to achieve power is, then, an important consideration when analyzing the al-Qai’da model.⁸⁶

The dominating characteristic of a given war is defined as military, economic, or cultural-moral. Within the context of “combinations” or “collective activity,” it is important to understand that there is a difference between the “dominant” sphere and the “whole.” There is a dynamic relationship between a dominant type of general war (e.g., military, economic, or moral) and the supporting elements that make up the whole. As an example, military war is always supported by media (information) war and a combination of other types of war that might include—but are not limited to—psychological war, financial war, trade war, cyber-network war, or diplomatic war.⁸⁷

It must also be understood that, at base, the intent of every type of Islamic war, with its dynamic combinations of multi-dimensional efforts, is to support directly one or more of the five main political objectives in al-Qai’da’s currently stated *intermediate* end state. They are to:

- Eject the United States from the Middle East;
- Open the path to destroy the apostate Arab regimes in the area, and Israel;
- Preserve regional energy resources for Islamic benefit;

- Enhance Muslim unity; and,
- Install *Sharia* rule throughout the region—one geographical place or one part of the human terrain at a time.⁸⁸

The intermediate end game, however, must always be seen in the light of al-Qai’da’s long-term political objectives. They are to:

- Take down all governments that are considered apostate or corrupt;
- Recover all territories that were, at one time or another after 711 A.D., Islamic (e.g., Spain and Portugal; the south of France and Italy; the islands of the Mediterranean, and some Balkan states);
- Attain regional and global hegemony; and,
- Reestablish the Caliphate.⁸⁹

To be sure, there are those in the global Muslim community who do not hold these extreme views.⁹⁰ But, al-Qai’da does hold these views, and to date is one of the best organized and most successful revolutionary (insurgent) movements in Islam. Currently, al-Qai’da is also the only Islamic Revolutionary Movement that is globally oriented; that is, not limited in scope and geography.

The Roles, Activities, and Some Results of Propaganda and Agitation in the al-Qai’da Program.

At first glance, al-Qai’da’s asymmetric global challenge might appear to be ad hoc, piecemeal, and without reason. Thus, a closer look at al-Qai’da operations in Spain and some of the rest of Western

Europe is instructive. After reviewing the basic facts of the brutal terrorist bombing of the Atocha train station in Madrid in March 2004, one can see that this seemingly random and senseless criminal act had specific objectives. Thus, one can also see the subtle implementation of al-Qai'da's intermediate and long-term political-psychological-hegemonic objectives.

An Example of Gang Agitation: The Madrid Bombing, March 2004.

Before and shortly after March 11, 2004, al-Qai'da's asymmetric global challenge appeared to many to be ad hoc and senseless. Nevertheless, a closer look at the ruthless terroristic violence in Spain in March 2004 reveals some interesting and important lessons. After reviewing the basic facts of the bombing of the Atocha train station in Madrid, one can see that this seemingly random terrorist act had specific purposes. At the same time, one can observe more precisely the roles of small agitator-gangs within the conceptual framework of the First, Second, and Third Stages of al-Qai'da's Islamic War. Then, one can see the results of these actions in terms of al-Qai'da's intermediate strategic objectives.

On March 11, 2004, 10 rucksacks packed with explosives were detonated in four commuter trains at the Madrid's Atocha train station. That terrorist act killed 191 innocent and unsuspecting people and seriously injured over 1,800 more. The act was considered to be the most violent in Western Europe since the 1988 bombing of Pan American Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, that killed 270 people. Despite its length, the 1,470-page official summary of the investigation of the Madrid bombings provided very little information. It indicated that 29 men were involved in that attack. Those 29 individuals included 15 Moroccans, nine

Spaniards, one Syrian with Spanish citizenship, one Syrian, one Algerian, one Egyptian, and one Lebanese. The summary also indicated that some of the individuals were members of a radical political group active in North Africa and that al-Qai'da exercised only an inspirational influence. Moreover, the official summary indicated that these terrorists might not have learned their bomb-making skills from al-Qai'da, but from the Internet.⁹¹

Subsequent British and other investigations of terrorist attacks in Western Europe provided considerable additional information regarding the March 2004 bombings in Madrid, and the 29-man organization that was responsible for that act. Those investigations indicated more than a casual relationship with al-Qai'da. Four of the bombers were al-Qai'da "veterans" from the second ring of the base organization who provided leadership and expertise for the operation. Most of the nonveterans involved in the planning and implementation of the attack were operating as part of the Third Ring of the Base Organization and were involved in criminal gang activities such as drugs-for-weapons exchanges, false documentation (passports, other personal identification, and credit card fraud), and jewel and precious metals theft. Additionally, the nonveteran members of the gang were involved in disseminating propaganda and recruiting Spanish Muslim fighters to join Iraqi and other al-Qai'da-sponsored insurgencies. The intent of these day-to-day activities was to help support and fund regional and global al-Qai'da *Jihadi* operations.⁹² In this instance, the normal criminal activities of the 25-man nonveteran member group were interrupted by the addition of four veterans in order to enable them to take-on the mission of bombing the Madrid train

station.⁹³ This kind of information leads to conclusions to the effect that:

- The small cellular organization that actually planned and executed the Madrid bombings was acting in support of al-Qai'da's Second and Third Stages of contemporary Islamic war;
- The committed al-Qai'da "veterans" who provided leadership and expertise for the operation came out of the second-level (ring) of the base organization;
- Prior to the planning and implementation of the bombing, the 25 nonveteran members of the bombing group had been acting very much like criminal gangs operating anywhere—up to a point;⁹⁴
- It was not until the bombing of the Atocha station in Madrid that this particular gang transitioned from an implicit political agenda (i.e., recruiting personnel and criminally generating financial support for al-Qai'da's political-military operations in the Middle East, North Africa, and elsewhere) to an explicit political challenge to the Spanish state and the global community. It was at that point, then, that these "delinquents" became "militants";
- The purpose of the action was not to achieve any military objective, and it was not a random act. Rather, the bombing was deliberately intended to generate strategic-level political-psychological results; nevertheless,
- The militancy continued to be treated as a social and law enforcement issue.⁹⁵

Another Strategic Disclosure: The Establishment of Small al-Qai'da Support Centers in Western Europe.

The long, but almost irrelevant, official legal Spanish summary of the bloody Madrid bombing left more than a few people wondering why and how: “A massacre of that size could be carried out by just a few delinquents?”⁹⁶ The answers to those questions did not begin to become clear until after similar attacks in London, England, over a year later, in July 2005. The British and, later, other similar investigations of terrorist attacks in Western Europe provided several frustrating and sobering findings.

Among those findings, it was discovered that there are several active al-Qai'da cells operating throughout Europe.⁹⁷ The intent is to establish support centers from which to conduct Second and Third Stage Islamic War.⁹⁸ At the same time, it is obvious—and Britain is a good example—that these support organizations are now composed of radicalized second and third generation (“home-grown”) Islamic cadres who have been trained and given experience in al-Qai'da-associated facilities and conflict ranging from North Africa, through Iraq, and to South East Asia (Afghanistan and Pakistan). The result is a rapidly expanding “home-grown” terrorist threat.⁹⁹

After the March 2004 bombings in Madrid, Spanish police began finding large numbers of Islamic militants in the major cities of the country. In that connection, police began to verify the latent Spanish fear that their country—called *Al-Andalus* by Moslems—is a priority al-Qai'da target. That is, there is a strongly perceived notion to the effect that there is an Islamic obsession

to reincorporate the richest part of the old Caliphate into *Dar al-Islam* (the land of Islam). In support of that Spanish fear, al-Qai'da argues that the Spanish and Portuguese reconquest (711-1492 A.D.) of *Al-Andalus* (Spain and Portugal) marked the initiation of Western European colonialism against Islam.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, recent statements by an al-Qai'da leader, Abdel Makik Droukedel also known as Abu Musab Abdel Wudud, in a "Message to our nation in the Islamic Maghreb," (to include Spain) further validate that Spanish threat perception.¹⁰¹

It appears that the main activities of the Islamic "militants" (no longer, "delinquents") in Spain center on: recruiting fighters to join the Iraqi, Afghani, and other al-Qai'da insurgencies, expanding the capability to support operational missions, and influencing governance within the various Islamic communities. These militants are also found to be engaged in other supporting operations for the global *Jihad*, in terms of money, equipment, drugs, and arms. Police also claim to have foiled a number of operational missions (attacks) that are allegedly directed at internal Spanish infrastructure.

Importantly, the large majority of the Islamic militants apprehended in Spain since 2004 are North African immigrants—of which over 500,000 are Moroccan. As a consequence, the support cell mission of radicalizing Muslims living in Spain appears to constitute an enormous political-social challenge for now and the future.¹⁰² Yet, the Spanish government appears to concentrate its national security efforts on the Basque and Catalan separatist movements.¹⁰³ To date, the only effort aimed at legal and illegal immigrants is a government plan to provide up to two year's worth (about 18,000 euros) of up-front unemployment

benefits in return for giving up Spanish work and residence papers, and returning to their countries of origin.¹⁰⁴

In the United Kingdom (UK)—as well as France and Italy—we see similar patterns to those in Spain. Moving to another aspect of the situation, then, it has been discovered that al-Qai'da terrorist activity is escalating. In a rare public statement, the Director-General of the British security service known as MI5, has made it clear that “[t]here is a steady increase in the terrorist threat to the UK . . .;” that “al-Qai'da-related terrorism is real, here, deadly, and enduring . . .;” that “[s]ome 200 groupings or networks, totaling more than 1,600 identified individuals are actively engaged in plotting and facilitating terrorist acts here or overseas . . .;” and, again, that “[plots in the UK] often have links back to al-Qai'da in Pakistan . . .”¹⁰⁵ As a result, the United Kingdom, as of mid-2008, is the only country in Western Europe that is beginning to think and act in terms of al-Qai'da and its radicalization of British Muslim youth being a serious national security problem.¹⁰⁶

Some key points and lessons to emphasize regarding al-Qai'da's establishment of small support centers in Spain and other countries in Western Europe are:

- Al-Qai'da's primary concern in pursuing its strategic objectives centers on small, loosely organized, hard-to-eradicate networks;
- The intent is to generate reliable infrastructure and franchise organizations that can begin to attack symbols of power and open new fronts (stages or war) virtually anywhere in the world. This deliberate and slow process is intended to facilitate the creation and expansion of the desired Caliphate by one piece of human and/or physical terrain at a time;

- Spain is perceived by many Spaniards to be a priority target for enhanced second and third stage Islamic War; yet, except in the UK;
- Al-Qai'da activities tend to be treated as social and law enforcement problems.¹⁰⁷

What the Propaganda-Agitation Effort Has Demonstrated.

Since March 2004, al-Qai'da has demonstrated that it can skillfully apply irregular asymmetric war techniques to modern political war, and has done so with impunity. In that connection, al-Qai'da demonstrated that its terroristic actions were executed in a way that made virtually any kind of Spanish, Western, or U.S. military response impossible. After over 3 years of investigation and the trial, the Spanish court acquitted seven of the 29 men accused of the 2004 Madrid train bombings and found 21 individuals guilty. (Note: One of the accused had been previously convicted on charges of illegal transport of explosives. Also note that four of the 29 accused committed suicide 3 days after the bombing.) Two Moroccans and a Spaniard were sentenced to 42,924 years in prison. Nobody else in the gang was sentenced to more than 23 years in prison. And, importantly, the men accused of planning and carrying out the attack were not convicted for the train bombing. They were found guilty of belonging to a terrorist group, or for illegally transporting explosives.¹⁰⁸

The Madrid attack also sent several messages to the Spanish people, the rest of Europe, the United States, and Muslim communities around the globe. The various messages went something like this:

- It is going to be very costly to continue to support the United States in its Global War on Terror (GWOT) and in Iraq;
- Countries not cooperating fully with al-Qai'da might expect to be future targets;
- Understand what can be done with a minimum of manpower and expense;
- Al-Qai'da demonstrated that the Madrid, London, and other subsequent bombings were deliberately executed in a way that made virtually any kind of Western or U.S. military response impossible; and,
- Al-Qai'da stood up against the United States and its allies—and succeeded.¹⁰⁹

As a result, the publicity disseminated throughout the Muslim world has been credited with generating new sources of funding, new places for training and sanctuary, new recruits to the al-Qai'da ranks, and additional legitimacy.¹¹⁰

Additional Strategic-Level Results of the Madrid Bombing.

Even though the information gathered throughout Western Europe from the investigations and trials connected with the Madrid bombing was treated cautiously and without alarm, the results achieved by the small 29-man cadre (gang) were dramatic and significant. The sheer magnitude and shock of the attack changed Spanish public opinion and the outcome of the parliamentary elections that were held just 3 days later. In those elections, the relatively conservative, pro-United States government of Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar was surprisingly and decisively defeated. That

defeat came at the hands of the anti-U.S./anti-Iraq War leader of the socialists, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. Prior to those elections, the Spanish government had been a strong supporter of the United States, U.S. policy regarding the GWOT, and the Iraq War. Shortly after the elections, Spain's 1,300 troops were withdrawn from Iraq, and Spain ceased to be a strong U.S. ally within the global political and security arenas.¹¹¹

These political-psychological consequences advance the intermediate and long-term objectives of political war that bin Laden and al-Qai'da have set forth. The most relevant of those objectives, in this context, are intended to erode popular support for the War on Terror among the populations of American allies, and gradually isolate the United States from its allies.¹¹² And, all that was accomplished by a small 29-man agitator-gang with little impunity, and at a cost of only \$80,000.¹¹³

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Al-Qai'da propaganda, the bombing of Madrid's Atocha train station in 2004, and the establishment of support centers in Western Europe have significantly opened the path to:

- Weaken the United States in the Middle East and Western Europe; and in turn,
- Weaken the position of the apostate Arab regimes in the area, and Israel;
- Enhance radical Muslim morale and unity throughout the world; and,
- Demonstrate al-Qai'da's capability to conduct Second and Third Stage (the Long War) conflict in Western Europe.

Where Al-Qai’da Operations Lead: The Long War.

Osama bin Laden and al-Qai’da have abruptly and violently contradicted the traditional ideas that war is the purview of the nation-state, and that nonstate and irregular actors ways and means of conducting contemporary war are simply aberrations.¹¹⁴ Al-Qai’da also demonstrated that limited conventional motives for conducting war can be dramatically expanded to strive to achieve the Clausewitzian admonition to “dare to win all” – the complete political overthrow of a government or another symbol of power – “[instead of merely] using superior strength to filch some province.”¹¹⁵ Thus, al-Qai’da represents a militant, revolutionary, and energetic commitment to a long-term approach to the renewal of an extremist interpretation of Islamic governance, social purpose, and tradition. That is, the renewal of the 8th century Caliphate.¹¹⁶ That, in turn, is a substantive challenge to Spanish and other States’ sovereignty.

Al-Qai’da’s Challenge to State Sovereignty.

Those disciples of Osama bin Laden who dream of a return to the glories of the 8th-15th centuries understand that such a dream cannot be fulfilled overnight. And these dreamers know that this kind of ultimate political objective cannot be achieved by *blitzkrieg* or “shock-and-awe” tactics that can deliver a final victory in a few weeks. They realize that the objective of a new Islamic society and Caliphate will only be achieved as a result of a deliberate and lengthy struggle that generates the destabilization and slow destruction of targeted states. This confrontation includes no compromise or other options. This is a

conflict with an absolute and unalterable objective, in which there is nothing to negotiate or compromise on. This unlimited objective, then, requires a long and total war.¹¹⁷

The “Long War,” however, is more than a lengthy war. It begins with a challenge to Western political and military leaders to adapt to some new realities of contemporary conflict. It ends with another challenge to Western leaders to contemplate the notion of interim “virtual states” within traditional sovereign nation-states (nonterritorial Islamic communities) and a type of war that includes no place for compromise or other options short of the achievement of the ultimate political objective—the renewal of the Caliphate. As a consequence, the Long War is total war in terms of scope and geography, as well as time.¹¹⁸

Osama bin Laden does not appear to be particularly interested in taking *de facto* control of any given state. And, he is not sending conventional military forces across national borders. He is interested, however, in influencing governments to allow his organization maximum freedom of movement and action within and between national territories. He is also interested in influencing and controlling the Muslim “human terrain” now living within various national territories in Spain, other parts of Western Europe, and elsewhere. Rather than trying to control or depose a government in a major stroke (*coup* or *golpe*) or a Maoist revolutionary war, as some insurgents have done, al-Qai’da and its various networks intend to slowly and imperceptibly take control of specific pieces of human terrain within the geographical-political territory of targeted states. This is accomplished one individual, one street, one neighborhood, or one Mosque at a time.

Thus, whether al-Qai’da’s pursuit of freedom of movement and action is specifically criminal, terrorist,

ideological, or religious is irrelevant. The putative objective is to neutralize, influence, and control people and communities to begin the long-term process to renew the Caliphate. This final objective defines the insurgency, a serious political agenda and a messianic determination to radically change entire political-economic-social systems and their values.¹¹⁹

Key Points and Lessons.

In light of the new world security environment that has been initiated by al-Qai'da, there is ample reason for worldwide concern. The results of that effort stress the following:

- Al-Qai'da has succeeded in doing what no other nonstate or terrorist organization has previously accomplished. It has demonstrated that a nonstate actor can effectively challenge a traditional nation-state, and the symbols of power in the global system, without conventional organization, weaponry, and manpower.
- Experience, and an expanding understanding of al-Qai'da activities in Western Europe, indicates that Osama bin Laden represents a militant, revolutionary, and energetic commitment to a long-term approach to return to Islamic governance, social purpose, and tradition.
- The premise is that ultimate success in renewing the 8th century Caliphate can be achieved as a result of the careful application of a complex multidimensional paradigm that begins with political-psychological war innovations, combined with the ruthless application of terror.

- That paradigm is enhanced by the addition of informational (media), economic, cultural, and other components of power that give relative advantage to al-Qai'da over an opponent that uses a unidimensional military-police approach to address the long-term conflict.
- These various dimensions of contemporary conflict are further combined with military and nonmilitary, lethal and nonlethal, and direct and indirect methods of attacking an enemy. Together, these combinations generate a powerful irregular asymmetric substitute for conventional war.
- Osama bin Laden's first and continuing concern, however, centers on organization. The activities necessary to achieve his ultimate political vision include the creation of a motivated and enlightened cadre, a loosely organized propaganda-agitator (guerrilla) network, and small multiform support mechanisms for the entire organization. The intent is to gradually widen the global battlefield to the point where al-Qai'da becomes less relevant, and the Islamic Caliphate begins to take control of the long-term struggle (the Long War).
- The Long War, however, is more than a lengthy war. It begins with a challenge to Western political and military leaders to adapt to new realities (e.g., a new concept of enemy and new centers of gravity), and ends with another challenge to Western leaders to contemplate the notion of interim "virtual states" (i.e., nonterritorial Islamic communities) located within traditional sovereign nation-states.

- Al-Qai’da’s assault on state sovereignty represents a triple threat –
 - to isolate Islamic communities from the rest of a host-nation’s society, and begin to replace traditional state authority with *Sharia* law;
 - to transform Islamic communities into “virtual states” within the host state, without a centralized bureaucracy and no official armed forces for a host nation to confront; and,
 - to conduct high effect, low-cost actions calculated to maximize damage that will, over time, lead to the final erosion of an enemy state’s political-economic-social system.

The global struggle for power, influence, and resources continues into the 21st century with different actors, different names, and different rhetoric. Thus, Lenin’s strategic vision for the achievement of political power and radical political-economic-social change is no longer the property of strict Leninists. Everybody – anti-democratic populist, anti-system populist, anti-globalist, “New” Socialist and the revolutionary left, and radical Islamist, alike – is free to study it, adapt it, and use it for his own purposes. Osama bin Laden and al-Qai’da is a case in point. As uncomfortable as this conclusion might be, however, Lenin also reminds us that there is a viable solution to the problem. That is, “We [all who want to retain the freedoms we enjoy] should have but one slogan – seriously learn the art of war.”¹²⁰

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Venezuelan, Colombian, and al-Qai'da in Western Europe cases represent a diverse array of contemporary conflict situations. The differences in these irregular and asymmetric wars are illustrated by a range of objectives, motives, and modes of operations. As examples, the Venezuelan case demonstrates a neo-populist and New Socialist set of motives and objectives. The present Colombian situation describes more narco-criminal self-enrichment than left or right-wing ideological objectives. And al-Qai'da in Western Europe emphasizes regional hegemonic political motives and objectives. At the same time, the Venezuelan case illustrates the use of institutionalized popular militias as a tool of contemporary statecraft. In Colombia, nonideological criminal and Left and Right-wing persuasion and coercion is being conducted by relatively large criminal or warrior groups (*bandas criminales*). And, in Spain and other parts of Western Europe, al-Qai'da is relying on small loosely organized networks of propaganda-agitator gangs to initiate the achievement of its political aims.

These cases demonstrate that the gang phenomenon (popular militias, gangs/cells, and *bandas criminales*) and its state and nonstate patrons are not directly challenging incumbent governments for control of targeted states. By responding to this kind of challenge to security, stability, and sovereignty in traditional ways, including accepting corrupt practices and/or pretending the problems will go away, most political leaders are playing into the hands of the phenomenon and the powers that support it. They do not appreciate the nature and extent of the violent challenge to political order and the values of democratic governance

being raised by state or hegemonic power-supported militias (Venezuela), criminal bands (Colombia), and small propaganda-agitator gangs (al-Qai'da). Yet, what makes these cases significant beyond their own domestic political context is that they are the results and harbingers of much of the ongoing purposeful political chaos of the 21st century.

These cases are also significant beyond their differences in that the common denominator political objective in each supposedly unique case is virtually the same. The common theme that runs through each of the diverse cases outlined above is that any indirect or direct attempt to violently control, depose, or replace a targeted government must eventually lead to:

- The erosion of democratic governance;
- The erosion of state institutions, and to the processes leading to state failure;
- The establishment of military or civilian dictatorships;
- The establishment of tribal states, criminal anarchy, or warlordism;
- The creation of "new" socialist, populist, or criminal states; or
- The absorption, division, or reconfiguration of existing states into entirely different states.

As a corollary, this cautionary tale and Colonel T.X. Hammes, USMC (Ret.) remind us that the United States still does not have a unified strategy and organizational structure to deal effectively with the debilitating type of wars examined above—that is, 4GW irregular asymmetric war.¹²¹ The strategic level requirement, thus, involves two different levels of analysis—cognitive and organizational:

- The need for civilian and military leaders at all levels to better understand the nature of contemporary conflict, and to implement a realistic and multidimensional ends, ways, and means strategy to deal with it; and,
- The need for an organizational structure to ensure high levels of individual, national-institutional, and trans-national unity of effort.

Ambassadors Stephen Krasner and Carlos Pascual have argued that in today's increasingly interconnected world, the chaos inherent in weak and failed states poses an acute risk to U.S. and global security. When chaos prevails, terrorism, narcotics trade, weapons proliferation, and other forms of organized crime can flourish. "Left in dire straits, subject to depredation, and denied access to basic services, people become susceptible to the exhortations of demagogues and hate-mongers."¹²² The international community and the United States are not, however, prepared to deal with governance failure. The United States and the rest of the world need to develop the tools to both prevent conflict and manage its aftermath when it does occur. Krasner and Pascual further argue that, "To promote sustainable peace, Washington and its partners must commit to making long-term investments of money, energy, and expertise."¹²³

As a consequence, in the spring of 2004, the George W. Bush administration created a new office within the State Department: the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). The intent was to create an organization that could help lead and coordinate joint operations across U.S. governmental agencies to respond to evolving crises around the world, in concert with the international community.¹²⁴ This was a step in the right direction and a worthy

attempt to develop a new set of tools for conflict prevention and conflict response. These tools ranged from establishing a capability to plan for stabilization and reconstruction, to organizing resources from various U.S. governmental agencies so they might be mobilized quickly in response to a given crisis situation.¹²⁵ The results of these efforts, however, have been disappointing.

The basis of the problem is that no single U.S. Government agency (the Department of State) and that no number of partial measures can be of much help in dealing with contemporary irregular conflict until:

- Fundamental strategic-level changes in the amorphous U.S. interagency organizational architecture are implemented to ensure an effective “whole-of-government” and transnational unity of effort;
- Strategic leaders throughout the entire interagency community understand and can deal with ambiguous unconventional irregular conflict in a comprehensive, coordinated, and cooperative manner; and,
- The entire civil-military interagency community can come together to provide the United States with a unified capability to utilize the instruments of soft and hard power that are effective in the contemporary global security arena; and, that can be integrated with coalition/partner governments and armed forces, nongovernmental agencies, and international organizations.

Such unity of effort recommendations may be found, for example, in the Phase 1, 2, and 3 Reports of the Center for Strategic International Studies (CSIS).

These comprehensive reports are entitled “Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era,” “Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: U.S. Government and Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era,” and “The Future of the National Guard and Reserves.”¹²⁶ Additionally and importantly, James R. Locher III and his associates at the Project on National Security Reform (PNSR) are making recommendations similar to those passed by the U.S. Congress in the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense (DoD) Reorganization Act. These recommendations focus on the bases from which the U.S. interagency community might develop a more effective organizational capability to work synergistically over the long term in complex, irregular, and politically ambiguous contemporary conflict situations.¹²⁷

In addition to dealing with the political and organizational difficulties at the interagency level, it is imperative to develop leaders who can generate strategic clarity and make it work. Like other members of the interagency community who act as individual instruments of U.S. national power, the expanding roles and missions of the armed forces will require new doctrine, organization, equipment, training, and education to confront the challenges of contemporary conflict. In this connection, the U.S. armed forces, along with their civilian counterparts, must also respond to responsible recommendations that go well beyond present-day conventional warfare.

Such recommendations, as one example, that pertain directly to the U.S. Army may be found in “TF (Task Force) Irregular Challenges CSA (Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army) Outbrief,” and “TF Irregular Challenge DAS Decision Brief on Interagency Cadre Initiative,” presented by the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College in 2005 and 2006. The

recommendations in these documents center on the cultural mind set adjustments required to transition from the kinetic fight to nonkinetic conflict.¹²⁸ In that connection, there are at least four doctrinal, educational, and cultural imperatives the U.S. armed forces must consider and act upon:

- The study of the fundamental nature of conflict has always been the philosophical cornerstone for understanding conventional conflict. It is no less relevant to asymmetric irregular conflict. Thus, it is recommended that the U.S. Army take the lead in promulgating 21st century concepts that can help leaders deal with the uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, and chaos they will face as an inherent part of modern human conflict.
- Civilian and military leaders at all levels must understand the strategic and political-psychological implications of operational and tactical actions in contemporary conflicts that involve entire societies. In these terms, it is recommended that leaders be taught how force can be employed to achieve political ends, and the ways that political considerations affect the use of force.
- At the same time, strategic leaders at all levels must be educated to understand the challenges of “ambiguity” so that they may be better prepared to deal with them.
- It is also recommended that the U.S. Army take the lead in revitalizing and expanding efforts that enhance interagency as well as international cultural awareness—such as civilian and military exchange programs, language training programs, cultural orientation programs, and combined (multinational) civilian and military exercises.¹²⁹

These cognitive and organizational recommendations are nothing radical. They are only the logical extensions of basic security strategy and national and international asset management. To quote Krasner and Pascual again, “The broader payoff is security. . . . That can only be in everyone’s best interest.”¹³⁰

ENDNOTES

1. General Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007.
2. Kimbra L. Fishel, “Challenging the Hegemon: Al-Qa’ida’s Elevation of Asymmetric Insurgent Warfare onto the Global Arena,” in Robert J. Bunker, ed., *Networks, Terrorism and Global Insurgency*, London, UK: Routledge, 2005, pp. 115-128.
3. Max G. Manwaring, *A Contemporary Challenge to State Sovereignty: Gangs and Other Illicit Trans-National Criminal Organizations in Central America, El Salvador, Mexico, Jamaica, and Brazil*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2007.
4. Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, New York: DeCapo Press, [1521] 1965, p. 196.
5. See, as examples, V. I. Lenin, “What Is To Be Done?” [1902]; “Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution,” [1907]; and “Socialism and War,” [1915] in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Lenin Anthology*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1975, pp. 12-19, 112-114, 134-141, 194-195, respectively.
6. Lenin, “The Tasks of Russian Social-Democrats,” *Anthology*, p. 5.
7. See, as examples, J. Boyer Bell, *Dragonwars*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transition Publishers, 1999; Thomas A. Marks, *Maoist Insurgency since Vietnam*, London, UK: Frank Cass, 1996; and David E. Spencer, “Reexamining the Relevance of Maoist Principles to Post-Modern Insurgency and Terrorism,” unpublished manuscript, n.d. Also

see General Vo Nguyen Giap, *People's War People's Army: The Viet Cong Insurrection Manual for Underdeveloped Countries*, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962, pp. 34-37; Abraham Guillen, "Philosophy of the Urban Guerrilla," Donald C. Hodges, trans. and ed., *The Revolutionary Writings of Abraham Guillen*, New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1973; Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, Beijing, China: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1999; and Jorge Verstrynge Rojas, *La Guerra Periférica y el Islam Revolucionario: Origines, Reglas, y Ética de la Guerra Asimétrica*, Special Edition for the Army of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, IDRFA, Enlace Circular Militar, Madrid, Spain: El Viejo Popo, May 2005.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-11; and "What Is To Be Done?" pp. 12-19, 112-114; and "Socialism and War," pp. 194-195. Also see "The State and Revolution," p. 324; "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky," p. 467; "A Great Beginning," p. 478; and "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat," pp. 489-496, in *Anthology*.

9. *Ibid.*; and Vladimir Torres, *The Impact of "Populism" on Social, Political, and Economic Development in the Hemisphere*, Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL), July 2006, pp. 1-18, available at www.focal.ca.

10. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues," *Anthology*, p. 671.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Russian Social Democrats," *Anthology*, pp. 3-12.

13. Ian Beckett, "The Future of Insurgency," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, March 2005, pp. 22-36.

14. President Chavez used this language in a charge to the National Armed Forces (FAN) to develop a doctrine for 4th Generation Warfare. It was made before an audience gathered in the Military Academy auditorium for the "1st Military Forum on Fourth Generation War and Asymmetric War," in Caracas, Venezuela, and was reported in *El Universal*, April 8, 2005. Also, in January 2005, General Melvin Lopez Hidalgo, Secretary of

the Venezuelan Defense Council, stated publicly that Venezuela was changing its security doctrine in order to better confront “la amenaza permanente de los Estados Unidos,” (the permanent threat of the United States) and that a document entitled *Pueblo en Armas* (*The People in Arms*) had been published that confirmed the primary military principles of the President. Reported in *Panorama*, April 27, 2005.

15. “War of all the people,” is a direct English translation of Chavez’s words—“guerra de todo el pueblo.” A more common translation from post-World War II national liberation movements is “People’s War.” Thus, we use interchangeably—as does Chavez—4th Generation War, Asymmetric War, Super Insurgency, People’s War, and War of All the People.

16. “Special Report: Hugo Chavez’s Venezuela,” *The Economist*, May 14-20, 2005, pp. 23-24; “The Chavez Machine Rolls On,” *The Economist*, December 2, 2006, pp. 41-42; “Chavez Victorious,” *The Economist*, December 9, 2006; Michael Shifter, “In Search of Hugo Chavez,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2006, p. 46; Michael Shifter, “Hugo Chavez: A Test for U.S. Policy,” Washington, DC: *Inter-American Dialogue*, March 2007.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.* Also see Steve Ellner, “Revolutionary and Non-Revolutionary Paths of Radical Populism: Directions of the Chavez Movement in Venezuela,” *Science and Society*, April 2005, pp. 160-190; *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, “New Regional Voice,” April 22, 2005; *FBIS*, “Expanded Telesur News Coverage Further Anti-US Line,” December 22, 2005; and *FBIS*, “Perspective Audience,” August 5, 2006.

19. Endnote #14 above; and Norberto Ceresole, *Caudillo, Ejército, Pueblo*, Caracas: Analítica Editora, 1999.

20. Endnote #14 above.

21. Neo-populism is defined as anti-system, and populism is defined as anti-democracy. See Torres.

22. Colonel Thomas X. Hammes, USMC (Ret.), *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century*, New York: Zenith Press, 2006, pp. 207-215; Giap, pp. 34-37; and statements made by President Hugo Chavez and General Melvin Lopez Hidalgo, cited in Endnote #14 above.

23. Evidence of President Chavez's expanding horizons may be seen in a number of different activities. For example, see Fernando Baez, "On the Road with Bush and Chavez," *The New York Times*, March 11, 2007, www.nytimes.com/2007/03/11/opinion/11Baez.html?; "Iran, Venezuela to Set Up HQ for Joint Cooperation," wwwiranmania.com; Steven Dudley, "Chavez in Search of Leverage," *The Miami Herald*, April 28, 2007, p. 9A; Christopher Toothaker, "Venezuela Weapons Worry US, Colombia," May 17, 2008, at news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080516/ap_on_re_la_am_ca/venezuela_chavez_interpol&pre...; and Simon Romero, "Venezuela," *The New York Times*, February 24, 2007, www.nytimes.com/2007/02/14/world/americas/14latin.html?; also see Max G. Manwaring, *Latin America's New Security Reality: Irregular Asymmetric Conflict and Hugo Chavez*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2007, pp. 32-36.

24. Public address of General Briceno, July 18, 2007.

25. *Ibid.*; and Endnote #13 above.

26. *Ibid.*; and for similar rhetoric, see *Radio Nacional de Venezuela*, September 27-28, 2005; *El Universal*, April 8, 2005; "Special Report on Hugo Chavez's Venezuela," *The Economist*, May 14-20, 2005, p. 25; Carlos Gueron, "Introduction," Joseph S. Tulchin, ed., *Venezuela in the Wake of Radical Reform*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993, pp. 1-3; Steven Ellner, "Revolutionary and Non-Revolutionary Paths of Radical Populism: Directions of the Chavez Movement in Venezuela," *Science and Society*, April 2005, pp. 160-190; and Ian James, "Chavez insta al mundo a rebelarse contra EEUU, *Nuevo Herald* (Miami, FL), January 30, 2006.

27. Briceno.

28. Endnote #22 above. Also, evidence of Venezuelan agitator activities may be seen in Oscar Castella and Nelly Luna, "Acusan de Terrorismo a 24 vinculados con chavismo," March 14, 2008,

available at www.hacer.org/current/Peru/02.php; Jose de Cordoba and Jay Solomon, "Chavez Aided Colombia Rebels, Captured Computer Files Show," *Wall Street Journal*, May 9, 2008, at online.wsj.com/public/article_print/SB121029900813279693.html; and Simon Romero, "Files Tying Venezuela to Rebels Not Altered, Report Says," *The New York Times*, May 16, 2008, at www.nytimes.com/2008/05/16/world/americas/16latin.html?.

29. These and subsequent assertions are consensus statements based on a series of author interviews with more than 400 senior U.S. and Latin American civilian and military officials. These interviews were conducted from October 1989 through July 1994; September 1996; December 1998; November 2000; February 2001; and March 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and April through July 2007. These interviews are cited hereafter as Author Interviews.

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32. Smith, p. 3.

33. Author Interviews.

34. *Colombia's New Armed Groups*, Bogota, Colombia/Brussels, Belgium: International Crisis Group Latin America Report No. 20, May 10, 2007, available at www.crisisgroup.org. Also see Diana Cariboni, "New Breed of Paramilitaries Infiltrate Urban 'Refuges,'" Inter-Press Service, June 27, 2006, available at p7.news.re2.yahoo.com/s/oneworld/20060626; Mayer Nudell, "Ex-paramilitaries form crime gangs in Colombia," *The Washington Post*, July 31, 2006, www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/31/AR2006073100508.html; Caleb Harris, "Paramilitaries Re-emerge in Pockets of Colombia," *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 14, 2007, www.usatoday.com/news/world/2007-03-12-colombia_N.htm?cas=34; Joshua Goodman, "Report: New Criminal Gangs

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35. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats," *Anthology*, pp. 3-7; also see Chapter One, "Introduction," to this book.

36. Author Interviews. Also see the discussion of the Rhizematic Command System in Smith, pp. 332-334.

37. Author Interviews. Also, a good example of this kind of thinking and action is found in Anthony Vinci, "The Strategic Use of Fear by the Lord's Resistance Army," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, December 2005, pp. 360-381.

38. Douglas Porch, *Uribe's Second Mandate, The War and the Implications for Civil-Military Relations in Colombia*, Monterey, CA: Naval Post Graduate School, February 2006, p. 3, available at www.ccc.nps.navy.mil; and "Colombia's New Armed Groups," p. 5.

39. *Ibid.* There are a number of additional citations that can be used here. They include Nudell, July 31, 2007; Cariboni, June 27, 2006; Harris, March 14, 2007; "Colombia: NDI Analysis Finds Parties Lack Credibility, Stability," in *FBIS LAP 2005/2004003*, November 22, 2005; "Pacto con el diablo," *Semana*, February 18, 2008; "The Truth about Triple-A," The National Security Archive, February 18, 2008; "Paramilitaries as Proxies," The National Security Archive, February 18, 2008; and "Unraveling the Paramilitary Web," The National Security Archive, February 18, 2008, available at www.gwu.edu/nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB223/index.htm.

40. This is a pattern that is well known in northern Mexico. There, the drug cartels and hired gangs are collaborating to control specified routes for drugs and other illegal commerce moving into the United States. Also see Manwaring, *A Contemporary Challenge to State Sovereignty*.

41. Cariboni, Forero, Harris, Goodman, McDermott, Nudell, and "Colombia's New Armed Groups."

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Colombia's New Armed Groups*, 2007.

44. *Ibid.*

45. *Ibid.*; and Author Interviews. Also see Ana Maria Bejarano and Eduardo Pizarro, "The Crisis of Democracy in Colombia: From 'Restricted' Democracy to 'Besieged' Democracy," unpublished manuscript, 2001; and "Colombia: A Failing State?" *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America*, Spring 2003, pp. 1-6.

46. *Ibid.*

47. David C. Jordan, *Drug Politics: Dirty Money and Democracies*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, pp. 158-170, 193-194.

48. Author Interviews; *Annual Report 1999*, Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank, 2000, p. 141; and data taken from Mauricio Rubio, "La justicia en una sociedad violenta," in Maria Victoria Llorente and Malcom Deas, *Reconocer la Guerra para construir la paz*, Bogota, Colombia: Ediciones Uniandes CERED Editorial Norma, 1999, p. 215.

49. A recent example is that Colombia extradited Carlos Maria Jimenez, one of the country's most feared paramilitary leaders, to the United States on May 7, 2008, to face drug trafficking charges. See "Colombian warlord pleads not guilty to drug trafficking," available at cnn.site.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=Colombian+warlord+plea..., May 12, 2008. Also see Frank Bajak, "Colombia extradites 14 jailed warlords to US," available at news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080513/ap_re_la_am_ca/colombia_paramilitaries_3&pri...

50. Jordan, p. 161.

51. *Ibid.*; and Author Interviews.

52. Daniel C. Esty, Jack Goldstone, Ted Robert Gurr, Barbara Harff, and Pamela T. Surko, "The State Failure Project: Early Warning Research for U.S. Foreign Policy Planning," in John L.

Davies and Ted Robert Gurr, eds., *Preventive Measures: Building Risk Assessment and Crisis Early Warning Systems*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998.

53. Phil Williams, *From the New Middle Ages to a New Dark Age: The Decline of the State and U.S. Strategy*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, June 2008; and John Rapley, "The New Middle Ages," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2006, pp. 93-103.

54. *Ibid.*

55. Ambassador Myles R. R. Frechette, *In Search of the Endgame: A Long-Term Multilateral Strategy for Colombia*, Coral Gables, FL: The Dante B. Fascell North-South Center at the University of Miami, February 2003.

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57. Author Interviews.

58. Simon Romero, "Colombian Guerrilla Leader Reported Dead," *The New York Times*, May 25, 2008, available at www.nytimes.com/2008/05/25/world/americas/25colombia.html?_r=1&th=&oref=sl... Also see Sibylla Brodzinsky, "Is Colombia's FARC on the Ropes?"

59. *Ibid.*

60. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Samuel B. Griffith, trans., London, UK: Oxford University Press, [ca. 500 BC] [1782, 1910] 1971, p. 73.

61. *Ibid.*

62. For primary source material on statements made by al-Qai'da, see usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/teror/99129502.html. Also see Raymond Ibrahim, *The Al-Qai'da Reader*, New York: Broadway

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63. Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the 21st Century*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.

64. *Ibid*. Also see Smith, pp. 332-334; Author Interviews.

65. *Ibid*. Also, “compelling one to accede to one’s will” is a classic definition of war. See Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret, trans. and eds., Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, [1832] 1976, p. 75.

66. Fishel; and Author Interviews.

67. Lenin, “The Revolutionary Party and Its Tactics,” *Anthology*, p. 8.

68. It should be noted here that al-Qai’da doctrine and strategy, as it might be applied by diverse Islamic groups, is not well-understood, and there are many analysts that are not in agreement on what the organization is, what the war-fighting doctrine might be, or what any kind of response ought to be.

69. Lenin, “The Revolutionary Party and Its Tactics,” *Anthology*, p. 8; and Author Interviews. Also see Walter Laqueur, “Postmodern Terrorism,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 1996, pp. 24-36; Qiao and Wang; Frank Kitson, *Warfare as a Whole*, London, UK: Faber and Faber, 1987; and Max G. Manwaring and John T. Fishel, “Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: Toward a New Analytical Approach,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Winter, 1992, pp. 272-310. Hereafter cited as *SWORD Papers*.

70. Daniel C. Esty, Jack Goldstone, Ted Robert Gurr, Barbara Harff, Pamela T. Surko, Alan N. Unger, and Robert S. Chen, “The State Failure Project: Early Warning Research for U.S. Foreign Policy Planning,” in John L. Davies and Ted Robert Gurr, eds., *Preventive Measures: Building Risk Assessment and Crisis Early Warning Systems*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998, pp. 27-38; Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, “On the Threshold: Environmental

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71. Robert M. Cassidy, "Feeding Bread to Luddites: The Radical Fundamentalist Islamic Revolution in Guerrilla Warfare," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, December 2005, p. 348; Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden*, New York: Free Press, 2001; Paul Rich, "Al-Qai'da and the Radical Islamic Challenge to Western Strategy," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Spring 2003, pp. 45-46; and Thomas A. Marks, "Ideology of Insurgency: New Ethnic Focus or Old Cold War Distortions," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Spring 2004, pp. 122-125. Also see Author Interviews.

72. *Ibid.*; and Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside the al-Qai'da Global Network of Terror*, London, UK: Hurst, 2002, p. 89.

73. Rich, p. 47.

74. This document is entitled "Pledge of Death in God's Path." For primary source material on statements made by al-Qai'da, see Endnote #62 above. Also see Stephen Ulph, "Mujahideen Pledge Allegiance on the Web," Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, November 29, 2005.

75. Lenin, "Report on War and Peace," and "Symptoms of a Revolutionary Situation," *Anthology*, pp. 545, 275-276, respectively. Also see Mao Tse-Tung, Samuel B. Griffith II, trans., *On Guerrilla Warfare*, Champaign: University of Illinois Press [1937] [1961], 2000.

76. Fishel, pp. 121. Also see Peter Bergen, "The Dense Web of al-Qai'da," *Washington Post*, December 25, 2003, A29. Bergen describes al-Qai'da and its supporters as a structure of concentric rings in which different kinds of operations may be conducted vertically and horizontally by different parts of different rings.

77. Michael Scheuer, "Al-Qai'da's New Generation: Less Visible and More Lethal," Washington, DC: Jamestown Foundation, October 3, 2005; Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone*, p. 135.

78. *Ibid.*; also see Gunaretna, 2002, p. 54.

79. *Ibid.*; also see Cassidy, pp. 338-349; Fishel, pp. 121-125; Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone*, p. 350; and Chris Heffelfinger, "Al-Qai'da's Evolving Strategy Five Years after September 11," Washington, DC: Jamestown Foundation, September 12, 2006.

80. Scheuer, "Al-Qai'da's New Generation."

81. *Ibid.*; also see Michael Moss and Souad Mekhennet, "Rising Leader for Next Phase of Al-Qai'da's War," *The New York Times*, April 4, 2008, www.nytimes.com/2008/04/04/world/asia/04qadea.html.

82. *Ibid.*; also see Michael Scheuer, "Is Global Jihad a Fading Phenomenon?" Washington, DC: Jamestown Foundation, April 1, 2008.

83. Author Interviews.

84. See Endnote #62 above regarding primary source material; and Michael Scheuer, "Taking Stock of the Zionist-Crusader War," Washington, DC: Jamestown Foundation, April 25, 2006.

85. Walter Laquerer, "Post Modern Terrorism," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 1996, pp. 24-25.

86. *Ibid.*; and Michael Scheuer, "Al-Qai'da Insurgency Doctrine: Aiming for a Long War," Washington, DC: Jamestown Foundation, February 28, 2006.

87. *Ibid.*

88. *Ibid.*; and Michael Scheuer, "Al-Zawahiri's September 11 Video Hits Main Themes of Al-Qai'da Doctrine," Washington, DC: Jamestown Foundation, September 19, 2006. Note: Ayman al-Zawahiri is the Deputy Chief of al-Qai'da.

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91. A copy of the proceedings and charges against the 29 accused can be found at: www.elpais.es/static/especiales/2006/auto11M/elpais_auto.html?sumpag1. See also www.usatoday.com/news/world/2007-02-15-madrid-terror-trial_x.htm.

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95. See Endnotes #91, 92, and 93 above.

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114. Fishel, pp. 115-128.
115. Clausewitz, p. 596.
116. Gunaratna, pp. 54, 89; Bergen, *Holy War*.
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